

Apple Butter Day
Edition

HOBART

HOBART

HISTORY



"The Oldest News In Town"

DO NOT CIRCULATE

Hobart History Advocate

Hobart Historical Society

September 29, 1979

706 E. 4th St. Hobart, IN 46342

INTRODUCING THE ADVOCATE

With this issue we proudly launch the **Hobart History Advocate** on the journalistic seas. As our name and motto, "The Oldest News in Town" imply, our purpose is to celebrate Hobart and its history in old-fashioned country weekly newspaper style. We publish on **Apple Butter Day** because this event also recalls the way things used to be and gives folks of today a chance to share in yesterday's fun.

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108 YEARS OF HOBART PAPERS

Somehow we doubt that Publisher Remaley is shaking in his shoes at the appearance of the **Advocate**. After all, the *Gazette* has outlived a good many rivals since 1889. Anyway, a little competition now and then spices things up -- and that ain't apple butter!

Back in the 1860's, Hobart folks read the Crown Point and Valpo papers for local news. The first known Hobart paper, the *Hobart Standard*, was printed out of Valpo by E. Zimmerman in 1872. It didn't last long at all.

Newspaper proprietors took their politics seriously in those days so when P. J. Kelly started the *Hobart Journal* in 1877, he advertised it as Hobart's first Republican paper. In 1880 Porter B. Towle, brother of Hammond founder Marcus M. Towle, bought the *Journal*, moved it and the plant to Hammond, and changed its name to the *Hobart Tribune*. P. B. Towle also published the *Hobart Transcript* for awhile, but Hobart folks were proud of their growing community which was one of the oldest settlements in the Calumet region and they didn't take kindly to out-of-towners' papers.

H. C. Hanson, a watchmaker in Hobart, started the *Hobart Advertiser* in 1884. Now there was a paper with real local character -- some folks said a real character with a local paper. He was an ardent prohibitionist and self-appointed keeper of the town's morals. Folks would buy his paper just to see what he had to say about saloons and swillshops, Sunday baseball rowdism, and his fellow citizens.

In 1889 young George Nearpass and G. Bender started the *Hobart Gazette*. They struggled along for about 6 months, then A. J. Smith bought it. In 1892 N. B. White and Smith joined forces at the *Gazette* and began a publishing and business partnership that was to last for over 40 years.

In 1899, Hanson turned full-time preacher and left town, selling the *Advertiser* to Zora Irvin of Hebron. He renamed it *The Indiana Cyclone* but it dissipated in 1900. A couple of other papers started up -- the *Free Press* (1892-95) which folded, and *The Hobart News* in 1910. O. L. Pattée ran the *News* and gave the *Gazette* a good run for its money until 1930 when the *Gazette*, now owned by J. F. Schofield, bought him out.

The Depression was as tough on newspapers as it was on most other people and businesses. Hobart had three -- the *Gazette*, the *Index*, and the *Index-Commonwealth* and which paper published depended on where the sheriff hadn't called in that week. In 1939 the Pikes, owners of the *Index-Commonwealth*, bought the *Gazette* and merged the two.

Cliff and Kitty Hanson opened the *Hobart Tribune* in 1945. Tom Myers, Jr. bought it in 1950 and stirred things up a bit with his versions of the news. In 1953 Leigh Plummer bought him out and the *Tribune* became the *Hobart Herald*. The *Herald* is now one of a group of suburban papers edited out of Merrillville.

Bill Pike published the *Gazette* until 1959, then the paper had a couple of other editors, underwent many changes in style, and faced some hard times as local newspapers began to go the way of the horse and buggy. *Gazette* readers sure perked up though when J. R. Stafford, "Bee" to almost everybody, bought it in 1968. Bee modernized production methods and made good use of modern inventions, like photographs, but her real success was turning the *Gazette* back into a good old-fashioned local newspaper with all the local happenings. In 1975, Bee turned the paper over to Joel Remaley, a Hobart boy, and under him the *Gazette* continues to prosper, not as a relic of the past, but as an up-to-date lively newspaper with all the stuff folks want to read about.

So, the *Advocate* doesn't aim to challenge the *Gazette*. We just want to join them in showing people what a great place Hobart is.

APPLE BUTTER DAY FROM WOODY'S BACK YARD

Early days with the folks making apple butter in the back yard are still very vivid in my mind. We made a big celebration with friends since it takes a full eight hours or more for a real batch. Since I have been making up a batch in the back yard for several years, it was a natural for me to transfer my operation to the front of the museum when the request came.

Now in the fourth year of progress, Apple Butter Day has grown from Dr. Robert Williams, my family and a few friends and I, to about 150 people participating in the old crafts and displays, all for fun and to help others preserve history, as we have experienced and remember it, for the future.

We feel that interest in the crafts will draw us closer to the past and help the Hobart Historical Museum by our participation in having a day set aside for this promotion.

Our main objective is to get people through the Museum this day on a quickie tour so that they will get enough of the feeling that they are a part of the effort to preserve Hobart History. We all are volunteering our services, historic items and financial support for this cause and it is FUN.

Woody Woodruff

Chairman, Hobart Apple Butter Day

PRESERVING OUR PAST

Many times the question has been asked, especially by the younger generation, "What and why is Hobart's Historical Society?"

The purpose of the Hobart Historical Society is to preserve and promote interest in our local history. We have made significant progress since the Society was first organized in 1965. The Museum contains many artifacts of our local heritage. We have many activities and programs for the public and are providing resources for researchers as well as beginning to publish historical material.

A major step was the purchase in 1968 of the former Hobart Public Library building. Our purpose was to save the building for the people of Hobart to enjoy in the future. As a library, it had been built with the contributions and sacrifices of many Hobart people and even more citizens have many memories of its use as a library.

We have succeeded in having the old Public Library placed on the Indiana Register of Historic Landmarks and our application is now before the National Register of Historic Landmarks. These listings will ensure protection for the building in the future and, we hope, will enable additional renovation and restoration work.

A good deal of our time, energy and funds have gone to the purpose of careful renovation to preserve the original character of the building, yet renovate it to the extent that it should last for many years to come.

By and large the Museum building is in good condition although several major problems remains to be corrected as funds become available.

What is urgently needed is an appreciable increase in membership. Individual membership in the Hobart Historical Society stands at about 200, including members of our Century Club. Each year many of our businesses and clubs also provide support through their contributing memberships. We most certainly appreciate their contributions both physically and financially.

What we need is more members -- young and old. The few volunteers who keep the Hobart Historical Society and the Museum going must have help to ensure the perpetuity of the Society and Museum. They exist for all interested persons in town and country alike. Your time, energy, or financial contributions -- whatever you give -- will help in preserving the past, for the future.

Join the Hobart Historical Society today.

... From the President's Corner --

Edward J. Hahn

SEE HOBART'S MUSEUM

Visit the Hobart Historical Society Museum and find out about the Hobart Bottling Works, a rocking churn, flat irons, Eastlake furniture, Hobart's cigar makers, early high school annuals, rationing in World War II, Hobart's first firefighting equipment, how wagons were made and horses shod, a wooden water pipe which was part of 4 miles of mains under Hobart streets, a lady's side saddle, and George Earle's ledgers where he makes note of furnishing the county commissioners with a pint of gin and three pints of brandy for relocating a road!

The Museum, at 706 East Fourth Street, across from the Junior High School, is housed in the Tudor style building which was originally the Hobart Public Library, built under a Carnegie grant in 1915, and purchased by the Hobart Historical Society in 1968.

The Museum contains two floors of exhibit space and includes a library and art gallery. Admission is FREE and the public is invited to visit Saturdays from 10:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m. Special arrangements are made for group tours and other visits.

Three to four thousand people tour the Museum each year. Between 40 and 50 school classes from Hobart and nearby schools come to the Museum for tours and lectures. The Museum is also a popular space for learning among Scout and other groups. The Museum staff members give programs outside the Museum and offer a number of different talks and traveling exhibits.

The library, includes a resource file of original documents, clippings and other materials arranged in over 300 subjects; a genealogy file of Hobart families; archive space for local organizations; maps; oral history tapes; photographs; newspapers both in original copies and on microfilm, and microfilms of the 1840 through 1900 censuses for Hobart.

Dorothy Ballantyne is Museum Director and is known as "Mrs. Museum" by many of the younger set in town who have been on her tours. The Hobart Historical Society Museum is truly a venture by Hobart people for Hobart. Visit the Museum -- spend an hour or an afternoon. Additional volunteers are always welcome for all kinds of projects.

LOCAL DRIFTS

Read the *Advocate* ads.

Gosh, there's no Bee buzzin' round town this fall.

When the Apple Butter Gang comes to town it means wood smoke, apple butter and bean soup in the air, not gunsmoke and desperados in the street.

When George Earle first set up mills on the banks of Deep River, the mail came to "Earle's Mills, Indiana". However, when Earle filed the plat for the town in 1849 he named Hobart for his brother, Frederick Hobart Earle.

In 1900 Hobart had 26 telephones. The directory appeared in the newspaper.

Looking for a unique gift? The Hobart Historical Society Museum carries a number of books and gift items which have ties to Hobart history and would delight the recipient. Stop in and purchase a Hobart exclusive!

In 1869 William H. Rifenburg installed the first bathtub and the first furnace in Hobart in his Center Street home. His neighbors thought he was nuts.

Gordon Brothers drug store installed the first soda fountain in Hobart in the 1880s. They were also the first to have a plate glass window. The same store, under Gordon and Buchanan, was the first store wired for electricity in Hobart.

You have to admire the Lions ... 50 years old and they're still roaring!

Ed Prusiecki has a new marquee up at the Art. This year marks 40 years of fine films brought to Hobart by Ed, first at the Strand, which the Prusieckis took over in 1939, then at the Art, which opened August 27, 1941.

TRAINS A BLESSING

The next time you get hung up at a railroad crossing in Hobart, waiting for the train to move, reflect on the thought that without the railroad, Hobart might not be here today!

One of the most significant events in the history of the Calumet area was the coming of the railroads. Timothy Ball, 19th century Lake County historian, divided our history into two periods -- before the railroads and after the railroads. Before the railroads came through, our area was isolated, with hardy pioneer settlements. Travel was slow and difficult -- Chicago was two days away, over sand and swamps or by water. Only limited goods could be brought in by wagon and there were few luxuries.

The coming of the railroads meant fast transportation and communication with the outside world. Agriculture and industry flourished as farmers shipped milk and produce and Hobart's saw mills and brickyards manufactured building materials to ship to fast-growing Chicago. The railroads brought in home furnishings and other manufactured items to grace our homes.

The Pittsburgh, Fort Wayne and Chicago Railway (now Conrail) reached Valparaiso in 1854 when the "money ran out". George Earle arranged to supply railway ties and financing to complete its construction to Chicago. The railway was completed in 1858 and Hobart became the first railroad center in Lake County.

Mary Gordon Ballantyne (1874-1959) was born and lived for many years in Hobart. In 1947 she wrote this memory for the Hobart Centennial Committee. In it, she vividly recreates the days when the railroads were Hobart's lifeline, rather than Hobart's nuisance.

THE MILK TRAIN

The center of activity for many years of the village of Hobart was the Pennsylvania station -- from 7:00 a.m. to 8:15 a.m.

The cause of this activity was the milk train that arrived at 8:15 a.m. This train was "made up" at Wanatah and was a combination local passenger train, baggage, and express.

This train's cause for being was to get fresh milk to the citizens of Chicago, Illinois. Farmers driving wagon loads of heavy, large tin cans filled with cooled milk began arriving from all directions anywhere from 6:30 to 8:00 in the morning. The milk unloaded on the platform supplied for the convenience of the farmers also held the returned cans of previous deliveries.

This milk shipping activity was one of the most active factors in the support of the merchants of Hobart. The farmer's monthly milk check supplied him with ready money the year around.

The Hobart stores were all open at 7:00 a.m. so that the farmer could do their shopping on their return trip.

It seems hardly credible that Hobart supported three drug stores, eleven grocery stores, six dry good stores, three millinery stores, two tailor shops, two harness shops, two wagon shops, seven churches, eleven saloons, two drays, one photographer, two furniture stores, two jewelry stores, two hardware stores, two bakery stores and one bakery shop, three blacksmiths, one cobbler, a weekly paper, two barber shops, one stone cutter, three doctors, one lawyer, a large hotel, and several boarding houses. These were all supported by a population of not over 1200 people -- and a farming community surrounding the village.

The milk train was one of the victims of progress; now, the milk is carried to its destination in beautiful white trucks and carried over fine concrete roads instead of through mud, clay, sand, dust and snow drifts by plodding, patient farm horses.

FIRST SEWERS

The Hobart History Advocate herewith fulfills the 1912 *Gazette* prophecy that town fathers would "be remembered in the future when the history of Hobart is properly recorded" for installing Hobart's first sanitary sewers.

The first sewer system had lines running from downtown Hobart, Michigan Avenue area, the "Canada" area, and Joryville, all meeting and emptying into Deep River at Duck Creek. The cost was estimated at \$60,000. Work began in the fall of 1912 and was completed in the spring of 1913.

That memorable Town Board included H.E. Keilman, James M. Ballantyne, William Scharbach, Jr., William H. Carey and William Lennertz. For the record, other town officials were Marshal Fred Rose, Clerk William Killigrew and Treasurer William C. Jahnke.

LOCAL DRIFTS

Doc sez: There are three kinds of people in the world ... those who make it happen, those who watch it happen and those who don't know it happened!

Road rally, anyone? In September, 1911, W.B. Owen made a trip from Hobart to Crown Point in his new Ford runabout in 29½ minutes. The *Gazette* printed a challenge to beat that time. The next week John Stocker in Fred Franzen's Overland and William Kostbade's son in his dad's Ford made the run in 18½ minutes. With traffic the way it is today we doubt that our powerful cars and good roads would improve these times any!

In Hobart's local elections of 1911, the four political parties represented were Industrial, Independent, Citizens and Progressive.

Hobart's first two-year high school course was organized by A.J. Smith (later publisher of the *Gazette*) in 1887.

The Sleuth is a popular quiz game for young folks at the Hobart Historical Society Museum. Ask for a copy next time you're in and play the Hobart history game.

In February 1908 Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Fite of Knox ran a motion picture show in the Odd-fellows building. One night in the middle of a show the projector caught fire. Luckily the volunteer firemen were on the premises, having stopped in after their meeting. The fire laddies extinguished the blaze in short order.

October 26, 1911 marked the closing of the last country school in Hobart. This was the Banks school on South Lake Park, built by N.P. Banks in 1893.

Our nomination for the nicest sign in town goes to Bob Krull's "surveyor".

Local history "best-sellers" at the Museum would make good reading for you and fine gifts for others. We have available the following: *Indiana Railroad System*, a history of electric interurban transportation in Indiana; *Gary Railways*, a history of the electric railway line that once served Hobart; *George Earle and Family of Hobart, Indiana*; *Along The Route*, the story of Hobart's post office and postmasters; *Old Settlers' Cemetery*, the story of the little cemetery on South Lake Park (Rte. 51); *The Calumet Chronicle*, a reprint of a special newspaper put out for Hobart's Centennial in 1947; and a little brochure on the Bicentennial Flags Hobart folks made for the American Revolution Bicentennial; and we can't forget to mention the book by the "Big Apple" himself, Woody's *Cooking The Dutch Oven Way*.

In October 1898 Mrs. Manteuffel advertised a sale of boy's lawn tennis shoes for 25¢ a pair and children's button shoes worth 65¢ on sale for 25¢. Tabbert's boy's satin calfskin shoes were more expensive at \$1.50 a pair. Stommel's carried a man's brown plaid suit for \$7.50 and a man's black ulster for \$6.10. Print suitable to make comforters was on sale at 3½¢ a yard at Fiester and Killigrew's.

We respectfully call your attention to our ADVERTISERS. In their establishments you will find the finest of modern goods and services at old-fashioned prices, all offered with the home-town friendliness and courtesy which never goes out of style in Hobart.

Many thanks to Wes and Jean Reder of Hobart's Steel City Publishing for their guidance and most of all their facilities to make this publication possible.

THROUGH RAIN AND SNOW

Hobart's first post office was probably at the grist mill, according to *Along The Route*, the history of Hobart post offices and postmasters by Dorothy Ballantyne and Bob Adams.

George Earle was the first postmaster, having moved the postal franchise from Liverpool on May 26, 1847. Earle may have used his vest pocket as a mailbox until the mill opened in December of that year. Hobart was on route 3195, a stage route from Joliet, Illinois via Coffee Creek, Indiana to Michigan City. The mail was delivered twice daily.

When Joseph Black became Hobart's 7th postmaster in 1861, he established the post office in his trading post on Main Street on the site of the present post office building.

Succeeding postmasters moved the post office to their own places of business and at various times it was located in several different buildings on Main Street and on Third Street.

In 1936 Mayor Frank Davis, Postmaster Joseph E. Mellon and Byron Findling, president of the Hobart Lions Club, turned over the first shovel full of dirt to symbolize groundbreaking for Hobart's first federally-owned building. The completed building was dedicated in May 1937.

In 1938, under the WPA arts program, William Dolwick of Cleveland, Ohio, designed and executed the mural "Early Hobart" which was hung in the post office. Although the painting was to be discarded when post office remodeling began in 1965, Postmaster H. Emden Rippe thought it should be saved and local artist Vic Sable restored the dingy and deteriorating painting. It now hangs in the lobby of the post office and is registered with the U.S. Office of Fine Arts and Historic Preservation as an example of the now scarce WPA art.

Hobart's post office has had quite a journey around town in 132 years and has been headed by many interesting men and women who served as postmaster, from George Earle, first postmaster, to Donald Gabrys, 24th and current postmaster. Their stories are told in *Along The Route*, available at \$3.00 per copy at the Hobart Historical Society Museum.

SOCIAL SCENE

Fifty years ago, in 1929, the *Gazette* carried much news of the social whirl in Hobart. With Monday washing out of the way and Saturday baking five days away, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday were popular meeting days on the social scene.

Here is a partial listing of the activities: Mrs. William Kostbade entertained the Thursday Evening Club and Mrs. John Rabe was hostess to the Wednesday Luncheon Bridge Club. The Whoopee Club met with Mrs. C.P. Kellen. The Magazine Club met with Mrs. Ferren and the Priscilla Club with Mrs. Byron Findling.

The Thursday Luncheon Bridge Club met with Mrs. Fred Baumer and O.E.S. Past Matrons were giving a card party. Miss Claudia Shannon won a prize at the O.C. Bunco Club and Mrs. Claude Clifford entertained the Wednesday 500 Club. When the Little Flower 500 Club met, Dorothy Mellon was a prize winner. The Ideal Book Club met with Miss Bess Hayward and Mrs. F.E. Demmon served luncheon to the Thursday Afternoon 500 Club. The I.D.C. Club met with Miss Grace Sullivan and Bridge Bunglers were entertained by Miss Jeanette Cavendar. Mrs. J. Woods won first prize when the Jolly 13 Bunco Club met and Mrs. Paul Emery was a prize winner when the Saturday Night Bridge Club met. The Thursday evening 500 Club met in East Chicago with Mrs. Julia Wilson and Mr. and Mrs. Gene Scott were prize winners when the Anniversary Club met. Mrs. Emil Moll was a hostess for Noble Grands Club and the Married Teacher's 500 Club met on Wednesday night.

The Gold Coast 500 Club met in the home of Mrs. Fred Ewigleben and Mrs. W. Halstead entertained the Friday Afternoon 500 Club. The Phi Lambda Delta Club feted Mrs. Herbert Larson and Mrs. John Hawke at a bridal shower. The Tuesday Evening Magazine Club met with Mrs. William Raschka. Miss Eleanor Rhoades was a prize winner when the Fun Club met. Mrs. Henry Colburn entertained the Wednesday 500 Club; Mrs. H.H. Hawke, the Pleasure Club, and Mrs. Fred Hamman, the Thursday 500 Club.

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